

State Elections Enforcement Commission

Citizens' Election Program



Press Release

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STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION ANNOUNCES SEVENTEENTH PUBLIC GRANTS OF SEASON

HARTFORD, CT – September 14, 2016 – The State Elections Enforcement Commission (the “Commission”) announced that it will make its seventeenth public grant payments under the Citizens’ Election Program (the “CEP”) for the November 8, 2016 general election. The Commission determined that state representative candidates Michael Demicco (D – 21st District), Tony Fantoli (R – 49th District), Susan Johnson (D – 49th District), Liz Linehan (D – 103rd District), Rick Lopes (D – 24th District), Mary Mushinsky (D – 85th District), Kevin Ryan (D – 139th District), Pam Staneski (R – 119th District), Wendy Tyson-Wood (D – 74th District), and Nora Valentine (R – 50th District) were eligible to receive Program grants. The Commission also determined that state senate candidates Stephen Cassano (D – 4th District), Paul Doyle (D – 9th District), Ryan Henowitz (D – 20th District), Mark Merritt (R – 5th District), and Michael Nicaastro (D – 31st District) were eligible to receive Program grants.

The CEP is a voluntary program which allows qualifying candidates for General Assembly and statewide offices to receive full public financing. To qualify for public campaign financing, candidates must demonstrate they have substantial support from the public. Candidates for state representative accomplish this by raising \$5,000 from at least 150 individuals residing in municipalities in their district. Candidates for state senate accomplish this by raising \$15,000 from at least 300 individuals residing in municipalities in their district. Participating candidates may only accept small dollar contributions from certain individuals—the maximum contribution is \$100—and no contributions from state contractors or PACs. In 2016, general election grant amounts are \$28,150 for state representative candidates and \$95,710 for state senate candidates. The Commission will be accepting grant applications from candidates until October 14th.

Since it was enacted, the CEP has considerably altered the electoral process. The CEP set off a sweeping change in the way candidates raise campaign funds by reducing the influence of large contributions and shifting the goals of campaign fundraising towards small dollar contributions from actual people, rather than special interests. Candidates no longer require access to personal wealth or the support of special interests, like state contractors, businesses, unions or PACs. Today, Connecticut candidates can mount successful campaigns solely relying on the support of individuals in their community. Now in its fifth full election cycle, the CEP represents an important effort to restore the public’s trust in the institutions of democratic governance.